Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting
REQUEST FOR COMMISSION ACTION

June 6, 2014

Division: Fisheries

Regulation Number: 301 KAR 1:015 **Regular or Emergency:** Regular

Proposed Recommendation: Proposal to Allow Idle Speed on Eight Department-Owned Lakes

Justification: This regulation would allow all legal boats (22' in length and less) to use their motors at idle speed only on eight Department-owned lakes. This proposal would not affect 10 hp and smaller motors. Three surveys were completed to determine the amount of support for this proposal: 1) a random approach which surveyed anglers living within 30 miles of each of the eight-lakes; 2) an online survey; and 3) six public meetings held within 10 miles of the department-owned lakes with dwellings located around them. Results from the surveys clearly indicated angler support, and the same was true from participants at all but one public meeting. Safety and noncompliance were the primary reasons cited for opposition. Anglers in favor of this proposal insist that the potential of a few violators should not result in restricting all boaters from accessing the lakes. With compliance, safety is not an issue; and to reduce noncompliance: 1) anglers indicated that they would report illegal activity; 2) KDFWR conservation officers intend to increase their presence at lakes where violators persist; and 3) signage will be provided to inform anglers of potential fines for boating violations. Over time, boating regulations are often changed to accommodate societal changes. If accepted, this proposal would increase fishing opportunities for Kentucky anglers.

Effective Date: March 2015 **Strategic Plan Reference:** Goal 2
Objective

Action Requested of Commission:	**Action Taken by Commission:**
X **File the Regulation**	____ **File the Regulation**
____ **Other:** _____	____ **Other:** _____
_____	_____

Motion made by: _____

Motion Seconded by: _____

Action: **Approved** **Denied** **Referred back to Committee**

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting
REQUEST FOR COMMISSION ACTION

June 6, 2014

Division: Fisheries

Regulation Number: 301 KAR 1:155 **Regular or Emergency:** Regular

Proposed Recommendation: Proposal to Restrict Commercial Harvest of Alligator Gar

Justification: An alligator gar stocking program was initiated in Kentucky during 2009. The goals of the stocking project were to re-establish a self sustaining population in Kentucky and eventually provide high quality fishing and bowfishing opportunities. Unfortunately, alligator gar are being harvested before they are able to attain maturity; thereby undermining the goals of this project. Therefore, we recommend restricting all fishing harvest and any bowfishing for alligator gar until the fish have firmly established a natural, reproducing population.

Effective Date: March 2015 **Strategic Plan Reference:** Goal 1
Objective

Action Requested of Commission:	**Action Taken by Commission:**
X **File the Regulation**	____ **File the Regulation**
____ **Other:** _____	____ **Other:** _____
_____	_____

Motion made by: _____

Motion Seconded by: _____

Action: **Approved** **Denied** **Referred back to Committee**

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting
REQUEST FOR COMMISSION ACTION

June 6, 2014

Division: Fisheries

Regulation Number: 301 KAR **Regular or Emergency:** Regular

Proposed Recommendation: Proposal to Establish a Sportfish Harvest Permit System for Paddlefish

Justification: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species and Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) are concerned that paddlefish are being over harvested. In order to prevent a negative listing by CITES, the USFWS is asking for more and better oversight on all forms of paddlefish harvest. Currently, KDFWR cannot estimate paddlefish harvest by licensed anglers who are snagging or bowfishing for the fish. Therefore, we are recommending a sportfishing paddlefish harvest permit system that would employ an online check system. Free paddlefish harvest permits would be available online or by calling KDFWR. Persons harvesting paddlefish would be required to log the date and time of capture, eye to fork length, and fish gender. Snaggers or bowfishers would be allowed to enter their harvest information either online or by calling KDFWR within one work day from the time of harvest.

Effective Date: March 2015 **Strategic Plan Reference:** Goal 1
Objective

Action Requested of Commission:	**Action Taken by Commission:**
X **File the Regulation**	____ **File the Regulation**
____ **Other:** _____	____ **Other:** _____
_____	_____

Motion made by: _____

Motion Seconded by: _____

Action: **Approved** **Denied** **Referred back to Committee**

Update Item: Cave Run Fish Habitat Project

The Cave Run Lake Fish Habitat Project was implemented to provide several expansive fish habitat areas located throughout the lake to improve fishing in the lake. Habitat is crucial for all fish, and when large amounts of habitat are added to somewhat barren or sparsely vegetated lakes, the biotic communities increase in number and abundance; including invertebrates, small fish and sport fish species. The habitat also provides cover or substrate necessary to attract fish for hiding, spawning, feeding or simply hanging out. This in turn makes sportfish more available to anglers. The Cave Run Project is somewhat unique in Kentucky due to the level of participation by other federal agencies, private businesses, and citizens. An update will be provided to inform the Commission of the project's current progress.

Update Item: Asian Carp: Projects and Stress-Related Mortalities

Asian carp have become overpopulated throughout most of the Mississippi River basin. In Kentucky, the basin includes our two most prominent western reservoirs, their tailwaters and tributaries, and the Ohio River and its tributaries; all of which have been inundated with these invasive species. There is currently no direct federal or state funding to assist Kentucky with efforts to control Asian carp. However, KDFWR has promoted fish processing businesses and implemented several projects in an attempt to collect data on the fish and to harvest them. Updates will be given at the Commission meeting for two ongoing research projects: The Ohio River Asian Carp Leading Edge Project and the Kentucky and Barkley Asian Carp project. Additionally, information will be provided to assess Kentucky's two current Asian carp processing facilities and a new one that promises to greatly augment Asian carp harvest from Kentucky and Barkley lakes, initially.

There have been a couple of fish kills below Kentucky and Barkley lakes; most of which were comprised of Silver carp. The massive kill in the Cumberland River below Lake Barkley was estimated at over 400,000 fish; almost exclusively silver carp. Fish samples were sent to Kentucky State pathologists who concluded that the bacterial infections and assorted physical damages were secondary responses to stressors brought about by a combination of factors including a very cold, prolonged winter, very cool spring temperatures, overcrowding, and spawning activity. Chronic stress (brought on by prolonged cold water conditions in this case) typically decreases immune system's ability to suppress bacterial infections. Additional stress, that naturally occurs when fish congregate and spawn, most likely caused the demise of a very large number of spawning fish. The second fish kill located in the Tennessee River below Kentucky Dam was smaller (approximately 6,000 – 7,000 fish) and was comprised of several species (silver, bighead, and common carp, buffalo, drum, and paddlefish); but primarily silver carp. Samples were sent to pathologists in Kentucky and Arkansas. To date, similar results have been found as in the Cumberland River; however, an increased level of gas bladder disease was also apparent. It is unclear whether the gas bladder disease was a secondary condition brought on by other stressors or a primary cause of the mortalities. The Illinois IDNR, Southern Illinois University, and the USFWS all responded (within 24 hours) to a request for sampling assistance from our Aquatic Nuisance Species Coordinator, Paul Wilkes. The team collected moribund fish samples, trawled for Asian carp eggs, electrofished, and conducted hydroacoustics and side-scan sonar surveys to estimate fish abundance in the river. We hope that this initial team effort was a precursor towards a future Asian carp research partnership.